from competent authority. As per the information received from MHA, the RAP/PAP regime is under review taking into account the security scenario in the country. As per the data received from the State Governments, number of foreign tourist visits to the 8 North-Eastern States, including Sikkim, during the years 2002,2003 and 2004 were 22047, 29478 and 39437 respectively.

Programmes to promote Meenakshi Temple

2931. SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Madurai Meenakshi Temple is being considered for selection as one of the seven new wonders of the world;

(b) what are the programmes of the Ministry to promote the Meenakshi Temple as one of the major tourist attractions in Southern India either through prints or electronic media; and

(c) whether her Ministry is funding for the renovation and maintenance of the Temple?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Ministry of Tourism has no such proposal under consideration.

(b) Information pertaining to Madurai city including Meenakshi Temple is disseminated through publicity materials and through Ministry of Tourism website—www.incredibleindia.org. Tamil Nadu Tourism also promotes Meenakshi Temple as a major tourist attraction through print and electronic media.

(c) No such proposal is under consideration. However, Central Financial Assistance of Rs. 15.00 Lakh in 1998-99 and Rs. 9.00 Lakh in 2000-01 was sanctioned to the State Government for improvement of environs around Meenakshi Temple.

Decline in flow of tourist in Assam

2932. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been sharp decline in flow of tourists from within the country and outside in the State of Assam;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the poor infrastructural facility is the sole responsible factor for such decline of tourists in the State;

(c) if so, what has been done during the current plan to give boost to the State tourism; and

(d) whether the Manas National Park could also be considered for new Eco-tourism Circuit in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): No, Sir. During the last three years there had been a gradual increase in the inflow of domestic as well as foreign tourists to the State of Assam, which can be seen from the data given as under:

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists
2002	1953915	6409
2003	2156675	6610
2004	2288093	7285

(b) and (c) Development and promotion of tourism is the responsibility of the States/UTs. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India provides assistance for the tourism related projects which are identified in consultation with the State Governments. A statement showing the amount sanctioned for various projects for the development of tourism under Circuit/Destinations Development during last three years to the State of Assam is as under:

(Rs. in lakh)

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Assam	721.30	313.46	821.75

(d) The Manas National Park has been prioritized this year under the Integrated Development of Circuit Scheme. For prioritized destinations/circuits, project proposals that are complete in all respect are appraised on the basis of inter-se-priorities and funds released subject to the availability of funds under the respective head.